

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600
1 August 1966

ARMY review(s) completed.

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Approved For Release 2006/03/17 : CIA-RDP79T00826A001100010009-4

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HIGHLIGHTS

Military activity in South Vietnam remained at a low level. The government, meanwhile, is continuing its preparations for elections. Seminars on election procedures are being established for local officials and a government delegation is being dispatched to South Korea to examine Korean political procedures.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam: US troops participating in Operation PAUL REVERE were attacked by a company-size Communist force yesterday with light casualties reported (Para. 1). Three operations, OAHU, CUU LONG 36, and KOKO HEAD are presently being conducted by allied forces in an area about 35 miles west and northwest of Saigon (Paras. 3-4). Ninety Viet Cong killed in Binh Dinh Province (Para. 5). ARVN III Corps commander anticipates major Viet Cong troop buildup and acceleration of activity in IV Corps (Paras. 7-10).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam: The government today began a three-day seminar for province chiefs and other concerned officials on organization, security, and publicity for the forthcoming constitutional assembly elections (Para. 1).

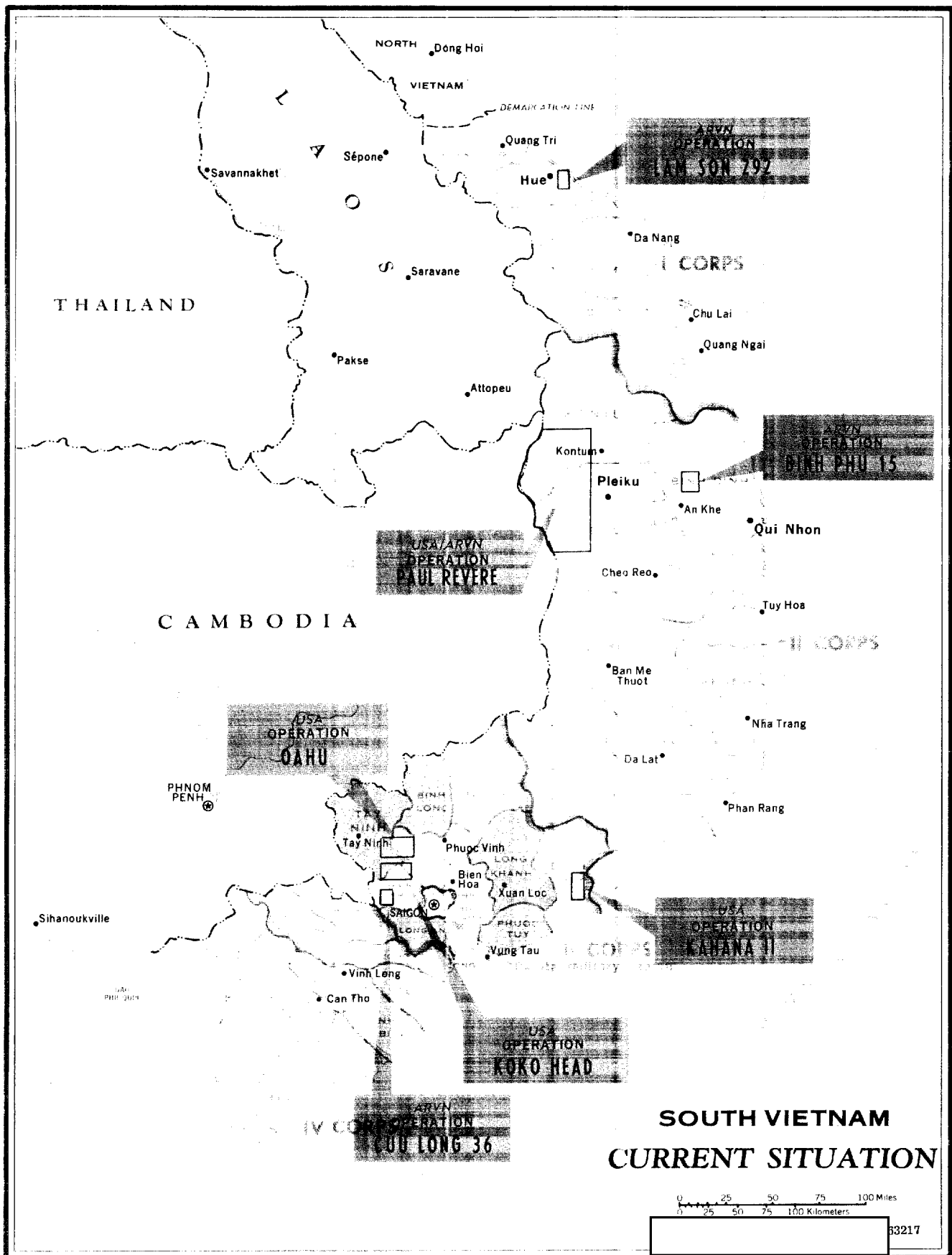
Deputy Premier Co will soon visit several African and European countries in an effort to enhance South Vietnam's diplomatic image (Para. 3). The Buddhist Institute Council reportedly has sent a set of four demands to the government (Para. 4).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam: Five US aircraft lost in North Vietnam (Paras. 1-2). DRV building bypasses for bridges on Hanoi-Ping-hsiang rail line and Hanoi-Haiphong line (Paras. 3-4).

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Two companies of the US 25th Infantry Division participating in Operation PAUL REVERE were attacked by an estimated company-size North Vietnamese force yesterday in an area about 20 miles southwest of Pleiku. In the ensuing three-hour contact, two Americans were killed and 20 wounded. Communist losses included 26 killed and eight weapons captured.

2. Multibattalion search-and-destroy Operation KAHANA II ended yesterday in Binh Tuy Province. There were no American casualties and only three Viet Cong were killed during the operation which began on 14 July. A total of 23 tactical air sorties supported the operation.

3. Three battalions of the US 25th Infantry Division began search-and-destroy Operation OAHU on 31 July in an area about 30 miles northwest of Saigon in Tay Ninh and Binh Duong provinces. The operation was preceded by an air strike of 17 B-52 Stratofortresses in the same general area. A Viet Cong arms cache including nearly 90,000 rounds of small-arms ammunition and mines, booby traps, and machine guns was captured.

4. One South Vietnamese Ranger battalion and three reconnaissance companies have begun search-and-destroy Operation CUU LONG 36 in an area approximately 40 miles west of Saigon. Contact with an enemy force resulted in the capture of enemy ammunition caches and two Viet Cong killed and seven captured. Four South Vietnamese soldiers and ten civilians were wounded. A US Army helicopter supporting the operation crashed, wounding three Americans.

5. A total of 90 Viet Cong were killed as the result of tactical air strikes which were flown in coordination with South Vietnamese Operation BINH PHU 15, a road-clearing operation 40 miles northwest of Qui Nhon. Three South Vietnamese were killed and eight wounded in the two-day operation which ended yesterday in coastal Binh Dinh Province.

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6. A three-battalion South Vietnamese search-and-destroy operation--LAM SON 292--began on 30 July in an area southeast of Hue in Thua Thien Province. One battalion was reported to have been hit by a heavy mortar attack early this morning. No results of the contact have been reported.

Anticipated Increase of Viet Cong Activity in IV Corps

7. South Vietnamese Army III Corps commander Major General Le Nguyen Khang recently expressed his belief that the Viet Cong may be planning a major troop buildup and acceleration of tactical activity in the IV Corps area in the near future. According to Khang, the commitment of highly mobile US combat troops to aggressive spoiling operations throughout the III Corps area has made it impossible for the Viet Cong to score an important victory in that region, and has effectively denied sorely needed food supplies to Communist troops.

8. In view of this, Khang feels that the Viet Cong have scaled down their military operations in III Corps and have begun at least limited major troop movements south and west to IV Corps. The following additional factors were cited by Khang as reinforcing his belief in an anticipated major concentration of enemy troops and activities in the delta, including Long An Province:

- (a) The absence of US troops and a quick reaction capability on the allied/GVN side in IV Corps.
- (b) The presence of large supplies of food, such as rice and fish, and large stockpiles of weapons which have reportedly been infiltrated by sea but which have not yet been used by the Viet Cong or uncovered in large quantities by GVN troops.
- (c) A large population from which to draw support and recruits, including

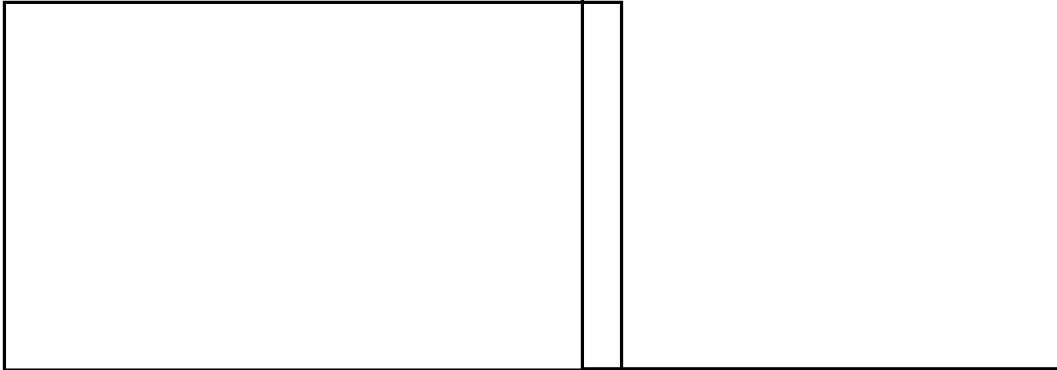
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a large ethnic minority (Khmer) which the Viet Cong can attempt to utilize against the GVN, particularly if they can get assistance from Cambodian officials in the propaganda field.

9. Khang only recently assumed command of III Corps and his analysis has not yet been independently supported by MACV.

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10. During the past year, the Viet Cong stepped up reinforcement of III Corps with troops from the delta, and, more recently, with regular PAVN units. So far, there is no confirmation that units are being moved back to the delta. According to press reports, at least one and possibly two US Army infantry brigades may be deployed to the delta region sometime before the end of 1966 to cope with any major forthcoming enemy offensive.


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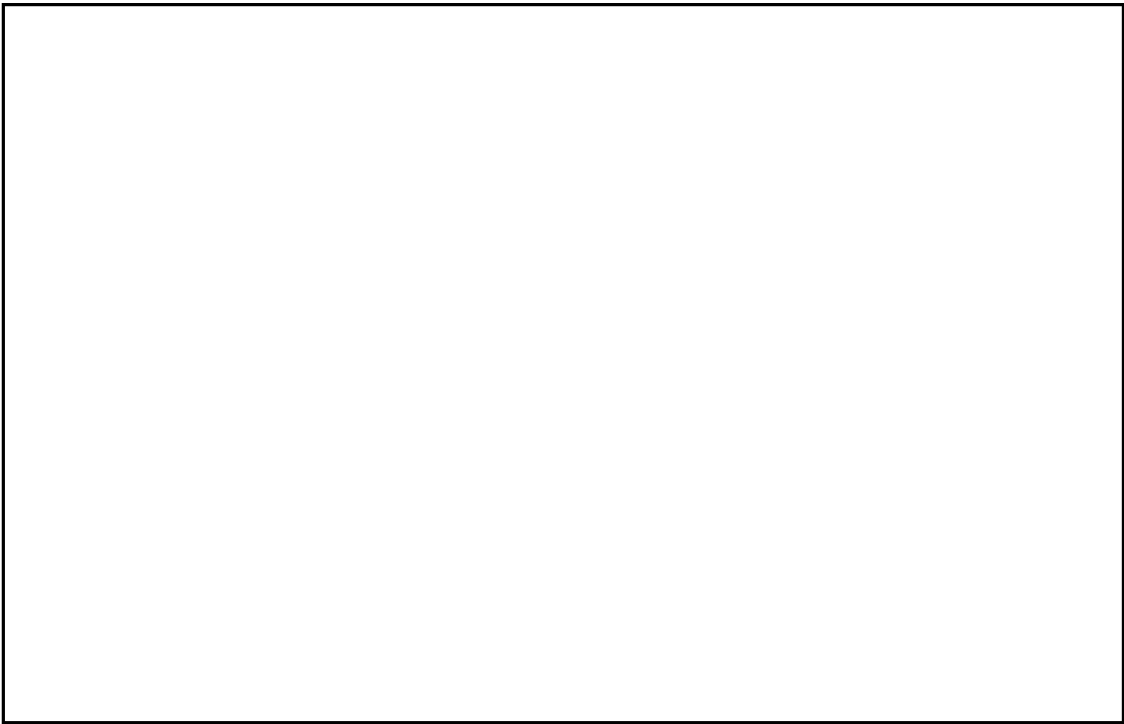
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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. The government today began a three-day seminar for province chiefs and other concerned officials on organization, security, and publicity for the forthcoming constitutional assembly elections. Before the working sessions commenced, Premier Ky stressed the importance of the election and the need for adequate preparations, and emphasized that the election must be honest. Ky also stated that military cadets and students from the National Institute of Administration would be sent into the provinces shortly before the election to assist in the mechanics of the electoral process.

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 Premier Ky and other government ministers definitely have stressed honest elections, including a specific injunction against moving military units from one area to another to influence the outcome of the elections.



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Deputy Premier General Co to Visit Africa, Europe

3. In an effort to play a more active diplomatic role, the South Vietnamese Government will soon send its military deputy premier, General Nguyen Huu Co, to Africa and then Europe, with stops at Tunis, London, Bonn, and Rome. General Co will first stop in the Ivory Coast on 6 August for talks with President Houphouet-Boigny.

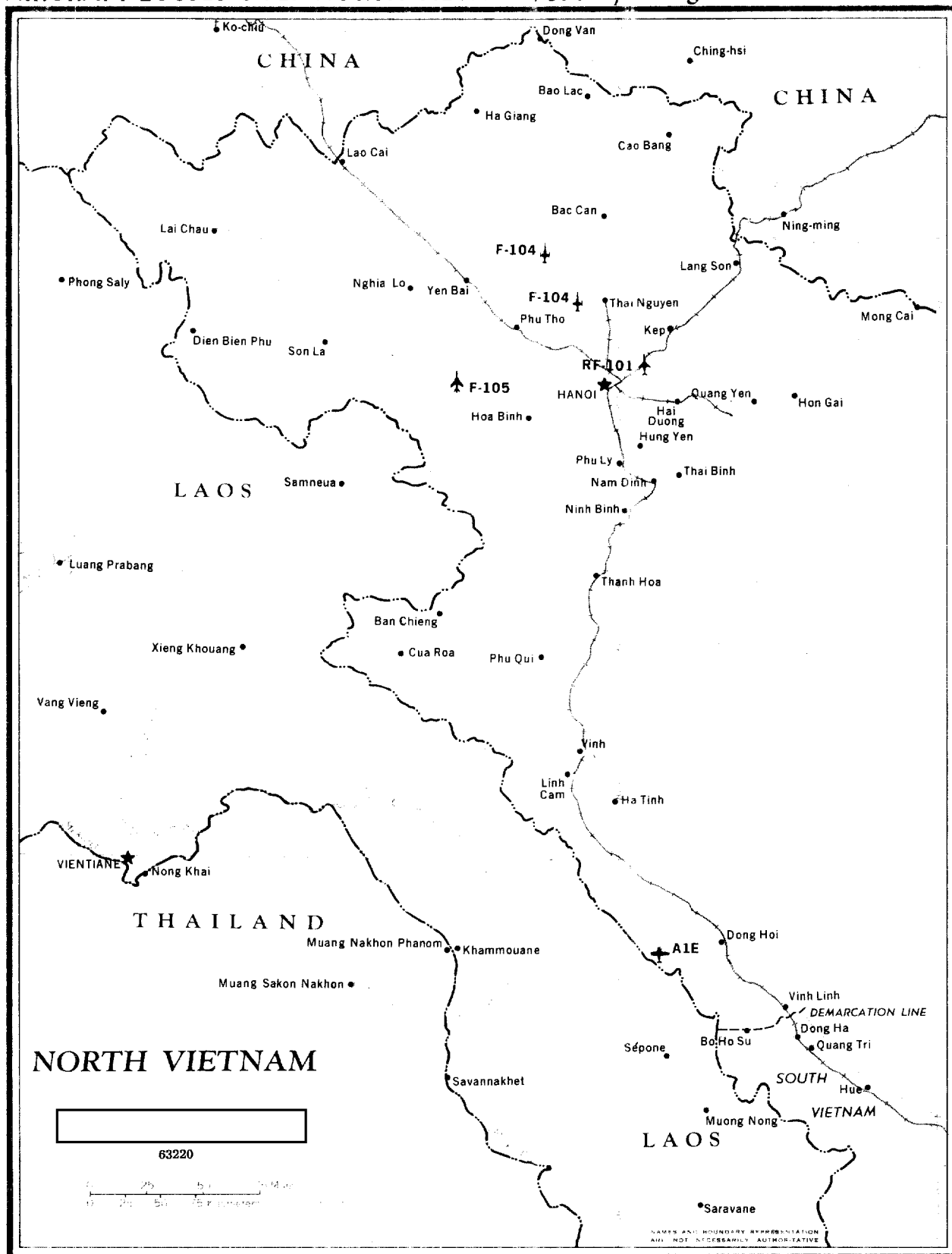
Buddhist Institute Reportedly Sends Four-Point Resolution to Government

4. According to a Chinese-language Saigon newspaper, the Buddhist Institute announced its decision to send to the government a four-point resolution following a council meeting on 30 July. The points included demands for the release of monks and nuns still under government detention, and for freedom of the press to make known Buddhist policy. The Institute council also apparently challenged the government to declare the Buddhist "struggle" movement illegal, and to follow up with normal methods of prosecution, including the arrest of such Buddhist leaders as Tri Quang and Thien Minh.

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AIRCRAFT LOSSES OVER NORTH VIETNAM, 31 July-1 Aug. 1966



III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. Five US aircraft were reported downed over North Vietnam on 31 July and 1 August. Two F-104 Starfighters were lost while providing escort for aircraft conducting strikes on SA-2 missile sites. One of the Starfighters, the first of its type downed over the DRV, is believed to have been hit by a SAM. The cause of the loss of the other F-104 is unknown. The F-104s were lost 35 and 55 miles northwest of Hanoi.

2. An F-105 Thunderchief was shot down by 37-mm. gunfire while performing an armed reconnaissance mission 60 miles west of Hanoi. The pilot's parachute was sighted and a search-and-rescue attempt is in progress. An RF-101 Voodoo photo-reconnaissance plane has been reported missing 15 miles northeast of Hanoi. Search efforts have turned up no trace of the pilot or his aircraft. An A-1E Skyraider was lost to ground fire near the Laotian border while conducting strikes 20 miles north of the Demilitarized Zone. The pilot was rescued by a US Air Force helicopter.

3. North Vietnam apparently has stepped up its efforts to construct bypass bridges on important railroads in order to reduce their vulnerability to air attack. Recent photography shows that nine major bridges on the vital Hanoi-Ping-hsiang and Hanoi-Haiphong lines now have bypasses completed or under construction. At two locations--Lang Son and Hai Duong--two alternate bridges are being built. A major portion of this work is probably being done by Chinese Communist military engineers.

4. The first major bypass construction was at Cao Nung--a frequent target of air strikes--where an alternate bridge was completed in April of this year. Since that time bypass construction has been expanded and alternate crossings are being provided for bridges that have never been subjected to bombing as well as for those that have

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NORTH VIETNAMESE RAILROAD CONSTRUCTION



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been damaged. As of mid-July, however, the Hanoi-Ping-hsiang rail line remained closed to through traffic. Photography [] indicated that both the main and bypass bridges at Cao Nung and the main rail bridge at Dap Cau were un-serviceable. The bypass bridge at Dap Cau had not been completed.

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5. Although the major effort apparently is being directed at keeping the essential Hanoi-Ping-hsiang and Hanoi-Haiphong rail lines open, some effort is being directed at providing contingency bypasses for rail lines south of Hanoi. Photography [] showed bypasses under construction around three serviceable bridges between Thanh Hoa and Vinh.

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